

Omaha Public Radio News

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Omaha's past and present coming to life on a downtown mural

Katie Knapp

OMAHA, NE (2008-08-01) Omaha's past and present are coming alive on a mural downtown. The project is called Fertile Ground and is scheduled for completion next summer.

Nationally-renowned artist Meg Saligman is painting the mural on the side of Omaha's Energy Systems building at 13th and Webster Streets. The mural will tell Omaha's story through its people and landmarks.

Saligman says the mural task is daunting because it's 22,000 square feet. But she says she's done other mural projects that rival the size of Omaha's.

Saligman was chosen to paint the mural by the Peter Kiewit Foundation and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts. Once she was chosen, Saligman made three trips to Omaha to do research. That included combing through Douglas County's historic records and photographs. Holly McAdams, Community Arts Director for the Bemis Center, says five photoshoots were also done. Those resulted in one to two thousand possible images for the mural.

Right now the mural project is about one-third of the way complete. By October, it should be three-fourths of the way finished.

The Peter Kiewit Foundation is funding the project and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts is managing it.

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